

Request for Applications– Watershed Training and Tools for Broadcast Meteorologists

February 11, 2004

OVERVIEW

1. **Federal Agency Name :** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds within the Office of Water
2. **Funding Opportunity Title:** Cooperative agreement to train and educate broadcast meteorologists on key environmental issues and to develop and explore new tools and mechanisms to convey environmental information to the public through local weather reports. EPA anticipates substantial involvement with the recipient in carrying out project activities.
3. **Announcement Type :** Request for Applications (RFA)
4. **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number:** 66.463
5. **Dates:** Proposals must be postmarked on or before **April 23, 2004**

SECTION I FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Project Background: Over the last decade, it has become evident that the traditional regulatory tools alone are not going to completely achieve clean waters across the nation. After successfully addressing many point sources of pollution like factories and sewage treatment plants, widespread problems remain. These problems include siltation, bacteria, metals, nutrients, and oxygen-depleting substances. Pollution from urban and agricultural lands, transported by precipitation and runoff, is the leading source of impairment. This, coupled with widespread habitat modification, is difficult to address through the existing regulatory system.

Overcoming these will require the involvement of local citizens who have a stake in the creeks, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and groundwater flowing through their neighborhoods and their communities. To achieve clean water, it is necessary to engage people and educate them on how many of their everyday activities can have an impact on their local watershed. People are generally motivated to do things to help out, but are often uninformed about the particulars of what they should do and what they can do to help. The ultimate goal of this solicitation is to help deliver these messages and other important environmental information to the public using local weather reports.

Purpose and Summary: This notice announces the availability of funds from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds. EPA is soliciting applications from States, Tribes, interstate agencies, and other public or nonprofit organizations that have extensive experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and environmental education. This experience should include, for example, delivering watershed education and training programs, designing workshops for broadcast meteorologists, and producing tools to assist broadcast meteorologists in disseminating environmental information to the public. Broadcast meteorology provides an innovative mechanism to educate people about critically important environmental issues,

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and it is one of the proven vehicles for disseminating complex and technical scientific data to the general public.

Mission: This solicitation ultimately seeks to improve the delivery of environmental information to the American public via broadcast meteorologists. This goal is consistent with EPA's Cross-Cutting Environmental Information Strategy in its 2003 Strategic Plan. The strategy seeks to enhance environmental results through the improved use of quality environmental information by EPA decision-makers, states, tribes, other partners, and the public to:

- Promote environmentally beneficial action
- Improve environmental decisions
- Promote more environmentally responsible attitudes
- Improve knowledge

SECTION II AWARD INFORMATION

EPA anticipates making an award(s) of up to \$150,000 (subject to agency appropriations) to carry out a series of activities designed to advance the environmental knowledge base of broadcast meteorologists through existing continuing education programs and through projects and activities in partnership with television stations, and other broadcast entities. The project period to carry out these activities under this cooperative agreement will be two years. Please note that EPA anticipates substantial involvement with the recipient in carrying out project activities. **EPA reserves the right not to make any awards.**

The anticipated project period for this award is June 2004 through December 2006.

SECTION III ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

EPA is soliciting applications from States, Tribes, interstate agencies, and other public or nonprofit organizations. To be considered eligible for this competition, applicants must be able to demonstrate significant experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and watershed training and education. This may include, for example, delivering watershed education and training programs, designing workshops for broadcast meteorologists, and producing tools to assist broadcast meteorologists in disseminating environmental information to the public. Applicants must fully explain why they meet the significant experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and watershed training and education threshold criteria. Applicants who do not meet this pass/fail criteria will not be considered or evaluated.

Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of a nonprofit in Section 4(6) of the Federal Financial Management Assistance Act of 1999, Public Law 106-107, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note. This definition includes nonprofit universities and educational institutions. However, nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in

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lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For profit institutions are not eligible.

See OMB Circular A-122 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122/a122.html>) and OMB Circular A-21 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a021/a021.html>).

Refer to the regulations cited in 40 CFR Part 30 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations: http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_01/40cfr30_01.html

SECTION IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applications must be postmarked on or before April 23, 2004. Since postal mail delays are to be expected that could inordinately delay EPA's receipt of applications, EPA recommends that applicants use an express courier service, private courier, or hand deliver applications to the address below.

Deliver signed original AND two hardcopies of each proposal to this address:

Attention: Patricia Scott
US Environmental Protection Agency
Room 7410F, EPA West Building
1301 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 566-1292 (phone number for courier to use, if requested)

Note: Do NOT use the above address for US Postal Service mail of any type.

As note above, to be considered eligible for this competition, applicants must be able to demonstrate significant experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and watershed training and education. This may include, for example, delivering watershed education and training programs, designing workshops for broadcast meteorologists, and producing tools to assist broadcast meteorologists in disseminating environmental information to the public. Applicants must fully explain why they meet the significant experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and watershed training and education threshold criteria. Applicants who do not meet this threshold criteria will not be considered or evaluated. Applicants should further describe in detail how they will help train and educate broadcast meteorologists on key environmental issues and their plans to develop and explore new tools and mechanisms to convey environmental information to the public through local weather reports. Proposals should include the following:

- 1. Introduction–** Explain in detail organization's ability and experience in delivering

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watershed education and training programs, designing workshops for broadcast meteorologists, **and** developing tools to assist broadcast meteorologists in disseminating environmental information to the public. Describe organization's interest and goals in entering in this cooperative agreement, the availability and qualifications of staff, and available resources to implement the project.

2. **General Description of how the Project will be implemented.** EPA is particularly interested in innovative applications that promote continuing education programs for meteorologists and that test out innovative tools and approaches to convey environmental information via local weather reports, such as:
 - **Watershed Curriculum:** Development of an on-line continuing education program on watersheds that would be tailored for meteorologists and delivered by an entity recognized by the broadcast industry for educational excellence. To the extent possible, applicants should utilize existing training programs and resources, including EPA's Watershed Academy (www.epa.gov/watertrain), in developing content and graphics that would be adapted to meet the needs and interests of broadcast meteorologists.
 - **Regional Pilot Projects:** Undertake pilot projects in partnership with television stations in geographically diverse areas to test various mechanisms and tools to deliver environmental information using local weather broadcasts. Funding may be used for the development of on-air stories, watershed visualizations, watershed tips, and other tools to convey watershed and water quality information to the general public. To the extent possible, the recipient should work with other entities for the purposes of leveraging resources and utilizing relevant regional environmental information. *Although EPA Regional Offices may not endorse specific applications, EPA Regional personnel may be available to provide technical assistance to successful applicants.*
 - **Electronic environmental newsletter and environmental news stories.** In a survey conducted by the American Meteorological Society, broadcast meteorologists identified electronic newsletters as an effective vehicle to communicate environmental information. Funding under this grant may be used to support the development of graphics, tips, and environmental news stories that can readily be used on the air. An electronic newsletter, for example, could be developed on a regional basis and sent electronically to all the broadcast meteorologists and news directors within large regional watersheds to provide *timely* environmental information to a large number of broadcast meteorologists. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to produce a well written, informative newsletter on a weekly/biweekly basis that

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- includes environmental topics and information that would be of interest to broadcast meteorologists.
- Identify and participate in key professional fora to train broadcast meteorologists and disseminate information regarding watershed protection. Funding may be used to host workshops and training programs, including travel for preeminent meteorologists, as well as to facilitate information sharing and dialogue within the broadcasting industry.
 - EPA is interested in a variety of methods for training and education and encourages applicants to consider a number of possibilities such as: distance learning techniques (web-based training, satellite workshops, etc.); and intensive training in the form of mentoring for individuals or small groups.
3. **Budget:** Provide detailed budget estimates by task, including travel. Budget should also describe any leveraged resources. If leveraged resources are in the form of in-kind services, estimate their value. Please note that EPA does not require matching funds for this assistance program.
 4. **Timeline:** Describe quantifiable goals, tasks, and a timeline for accomplishing tasks, including measures of success.
 5. **Required Federal and EPA Forms. All applicants must submit the following:**
 - **Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)**
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>. The SF 424 is a standard Federal form to be used by applicants as a required cover sheet for this cooperative agreement program. **NOTE:** Block No. 10 requires a “Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance” (CFDA) number be entered. Use CFDA Number 66.463 for this cooperative agreement.
 - **Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)**
 6. Grant applicants will be required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (d&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants and cooperative agreements. Applicants can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting www.dnb.com.
 7. Applicants requested to submit a full application may be required to comply with Intergovernmental Review Requirements (40 CFR part 29).

SECTION V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

This program is competitive, and EPA will review and evaluate proposals and make a cooperative agreement(s) based upon the applicant’s ability to meet the evaluation factors stated below. EPA will establish a review panel consisting of Federal employees familiar with watershed training and education

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and outreach. Each individual will score applications using the evaluation factors. Applications will be ranked according to average score. Final selections will be approved by EPA senior management.

To be considered, as a threshold criteria, applicants must demonstrate experience in the field of broadcast meteorology and watershed training and education (see Section III). Applicants that do not meet this pass/fail criteria shall not be considered or evaluated. Applicants that meet this threshold criteria will then be ranked according to the following evaluation factors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Degree of experience and demonstrated knowledge in watershed education and training, including the development of projects, workshops, tools, and training programs for broadcast meteorologists. (30 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrated knowledge, experience, and working relationship with broadcast meteorologists and their professional societies. (20 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Detailed program plan, which includes innovative approaches and creative tools to train and educate broadcast meteorologists in environmental weather reporting and to assist them in delivering environmental information to the general public through local weather reports. The plan must include: quantifiable goals, tasks, and a reasonable timeline for accomplishing tasks and measures of success (20 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Efficiency and effectiveness of applicant's budget. (5 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leveraging of additional resources, both financial and in-kind support. Applicants are encouraged to provide information regarding resources (cash/in-kind services) that they, or a project partner, would commit. Although EPA is not requiring a specific match, EPA will consider these commitments as part of this ranking factor. (5 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrated ability of applicant to effectively manage a federal assistance award. Applicants must disclose audit findings, cost disallowances, special terms and conditions, or any adverse actions relating to their performance of a federal assistance agreement. (10 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Applicant's plan to evaluate and report to EPA on the success and lessons learned of its program, based on clearly articulated measurable outcomes, including results related to goals and objectives outline in EPA's Strategic Plan http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm (10 points).

EPA will notify, in writing, those applicants that were not selected within 60 days of receiving

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applications. EPA will notify the selected applicant by telephone and email. The selected applicant may be asked to modify their workplan and budget.

SECTION VI **AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

For grants and agreements with States, local governments and Indian tribal governments, the procedures and requirements should be in conformance with 40 CFR Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," 40 CFR Part 35, "Environmental Program Grants-State, Interstate, and Local Governments Agencies" and OMB Circular Nos. A-87 "Cost Principles for State and Local Governments" and A-102, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements for States and Local Governments." For grants and agreements with other entities the procedures should be in conformance with 40 CFR Part 30, "Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations" and OMB Circulars Nos. A-21 for universities, "Cost principles for Educational Institutions," and and A-122 for non-profit organizations, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations." <http://whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>.

In accordance with EPA guidance and the OMB Circulars, as appropriate, the recipient must agree that it will not use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress, or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements or contracts). The terms and conditions of the formal cooperative agreement may put additional and specific limitations on the funding.

In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually

SECTION VII **AGENCY CONTACT (S)**

Questions should be directed via email to Patricia Scott, U.S. EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds at scott.patricia@epa.gov. Please note that EPA cannot provide pre-application assistance that will provide a competitive advantage. Answers to significant questions will be posted on the web at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/weather/>. Please periodically refer to the EPA website containing this Request For Applications for possible postings of supplemental information relevant to applying for this cooperative agreement.

SECTION VIII **OTHER INFORMATION**

EPA reserves the right to not make any awards, and funding is contingent on agency appropriations.

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DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Any disputes regarding proposals or applications submitted in response to these guidelines will be resolved in accordance with 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, subpart F.

COALITION APPLICATIONS

EPA encourages applications from coalitions. Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application for this cooperative agreement(s). However, one recipient will have to serve as the lead since EPA can not issue assistance awards to partnerships. Coalitions must, therefore, identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the cooperative agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient. Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 40 CFR 30.2(ff). **Please note that for-profits are not eligible applicants.** Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement provisions of 40 CFR Part 30. The recipient must administer the cooperative agreement, is accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 40 CFR 30.2(gg), subrecipients are accountable to the recipient for proper use of EPA funding.

Official notification of the actual cooperative agreement award will be made to the organization by EPA's Grants Administration Division in accordance with standard Agency practices.